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File Post Mortem

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Draft

13 November 1953

Memorandum For: AD/NE

Subject: Post Mortem Procedure W/O ATT

Reference: Memorandum for the IAC, dated 3 June, Procedure for Reducing Intelligence Deficiencies in NIE's

1. The cited memo outlines a procedure for conducting what became known as Post-Mortems. The memo stipulates that, during the preparation of each estimate, the IAC agencies will inform O/NE of any intelligence deficiencies and that upon completion of the estimate O/NE will prepare a "consolidated critique" which would eventually be approved by the IAC, thus setting in motion appropriate action to remedy any intelligence deficiencies.

2. No post-mortem memo has been prepared by O/NE since 3 March 1953, and no IAC representatives meeting on a post-mortem memo has been held since 16 December 1952. In view of the explicit instructions in the cited reference, O/NE may at any time be called upon to explain why it has not followed instructions.

3. Experience with the procedure outlined in paragraph 1 above indicates several flaws. Tying the post-mortem to individual estimates proved generally unsatisfactory. In many cases the problem was to determine what conclusions to draw from available facts rather than to collect more facts. In other cases, appropriate collection action had already been taken as the result of a prior estimate on the same area

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and any further action would be duplicatory. In many instances, no specific action was considered necessary other than for each agency to take continuing action within the field of its responsibilities; it was considered superfluous to initiate special procedures to tell each agency to continue carrying out its assigned mission. The net result was a series of post-mortem memos which concluded that no action was necessary, and thereby implied that no intelligence deficiencies existed.

4. It is obvious, however, that intelligence deficiencies do exist and that the IAC bears ultimate responsibility for detecting them and initiating action for remedying them. It is believed that ~~many~~ of the deficiencies ~~noted above~~ could be remedied by a post-mortem issued quarterly rather than after each estimate. The post-mortem could be issued simultaneously with the quarterly revision of the estimates program. Such a publication would provide further guidance to research and collection agencies and would provide the basis for a more comprehensive attack on intelligence deficiencies.

5. Attached is a draft memo being submitted for IAC approval. The following procedure is being suggested as a means of O/NE's fullfilling its responsibilities in preparing the quarterly report. This procedure will be followed in O/NE even if the IAC does not approve the new post-mortem procedure.

6. Within one week after IAC approval of an NIE or SE, the Task Team Chairman will submit to the Chief, Estimates Staff, a memorandum

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covering the following points:

a. Origin and brief chronological history of the estimate;

b. Quality of the contributions and extent of participation by other components of CIA;

c. Major substantive problems in clearing the paper through the Chief, Estimates Staff; the Board; the IAC Reps; the IAC;

d. Major bottlenecks and delays;

e. Intelligence deficiencies and suggestions for remedying them;

f. Miscellaneous.

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